Shortage of soldiers

†311. SHRI AMIR ALAM KHAN: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is an acute shortage of soldiers and army men in the army;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the urgent steps being taken by Government to enhance recruitment in the army for the safety of the country; and

(d) the outcome of the measures taken by Government?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY): (a) to (d) There is no shortage of soldiers in the Army. However, there is a shortage of 11,371 officers in the Army which is mainly in the ranks of Lieutenant Colonel & below.

Several measures have been taken by the Government to enhance recruitment in the Army. All Officers including those in Short Service Commission (SSC) have been made eligible to hold substantive rank of Captain, Major and Lieutenant Colonel and equivalents after 2, 6 and 13 years of reckonable service respectively. The term of SSC Officers has been extended to 14 years. This has made the Army an attractive career option. Besides Army has undertaken sustained image projection publicity campaign to create awareness among the youth. Awareness campaigns, participation in career fairs and exhibitions, advertisements in print and electronic media are also some of the other measures in this direction.

Compulsory NCC training

312. SHRI O.T. LEPCHA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have any proposal to impact NCC training to every student compulsorily at Higher Secondary level in the country to instill a sense of patriotism;

(b) if so, the details of the scheme and proposal;

(c) if not, the reason therefore; and

(d) the reaction of Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY): (a) No, Sir. (b) to (d) Does not arise in view of (a) above.

AV Committee recommendation on SSO and regular officers

313. SHRI VIJAY J. DARDA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) have the recommendations of the "Ajay Vikram Singh Committee" laying down that 1,100 Short Service Officers and 500 regular officers be taken every year, rather than following the prevailing practice of commissioning 1,000 regular and 500 Short Service Officers;

(b) if so, from which year AV Committee's this recommendation is being followed; and

(c) if not, what are the reasons for not implementing this recommendation?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY): (a) to (c) In May 2001, Army HQrs had forwarded a paper to the Ministry of Defence drawing attention to certain shortcomings and imbalances in the organizational structure of the officers cadre with the aim of achieving optimal combat effectiveness by bringing down the age profile of Battalions/Brigade Commanders and to make the organization more effective in fulfilling individual career aspirations of the officers.

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.